



**Martin O'Malley, Governor Anthony Brown, Lieutenant Governor
Israel C. Patoka, Executive Director**

**Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture
Theodore H. Mack, Commission Chair**

The Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture serves as the statewide clearinghouse for preserving evidence of and documenting the African-American experience in Maryland. It specializes in research assistance and collection of historical materials - art objects, memorabilia, manuscripts, photographs, and other articles of significance to African-American history and culture. For the community at large and Maryland educational systems and institutions, the Commission provides exhibits, programs and resource materials.

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Governor O'Malley Appoints New Director for African American Commission and Banneker-Douglass Museum

Governor Martin O'Malley has selected Joni Jones, PhD to serve as Executive Director of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. Dr. Jones will also be responsible for the operation and management of the Banneker-Douglass Museum (BDM), the State's official repository of African American material culture.

Historic preservation and academic excellence have always been prevalent in Dr. Jones' life. Born and raised in the historically African American neighborhood of Queenstown in Severn, her family roots in Maryland date back to the period of Reconstruction. Dr. Jones is the granddaughter of Sarah and Oscar Gaither who provided the land for the Queenstown Rosenwald School, a Maryland Historic property. She is the niece of Fulbright Scholar and longtime Anne Arundel County educator, Sylvia Gaither Garrison, to whom the Banneker-Douglass Museum library and archives are dedicated.

"The African American experience in Maryland is a story of major contributions to science, the arts, education and social change," said Governor O'Malley. "It is important that the director of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture and the Banneker-Douglass Museum understands the significance of that experience in the progression of our state and this great nation. For Dr. Jones, that understanding was a birthright."

Dr. Jones earned an MA and a PhD in English from UCLA and after returning to Maryland, earned an MLS from the University of Maryland, College Park. She brings a wealth of skill and energy to the commission and museum, with over ten years of teaching experience combined with advanced training in library science, archival management, and program development. While UM College Park, she lent her talents to the Wiley H. Bates High School Redevelopment Project, now known as Bates Heritage Park and was the first executive director of the Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center. Since 2007 she has served as Librarian-Archivist for the Sylvia Gaither Garrison Library at the Banneker-Douglass Museum.

“The Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture is looking forward to working with Dr. Jones to not only preserve but share our history with our fellow Marylanders,” said commission chair Theodore H. “Ted” Mack. “African Americans from Maryland are among the greatest thinkers, inventors and educators of the world. Dr. Jones is going to help us make sure everyone knows about it.”

As Executive Director, Dr. Jones will work with the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture in fulfilling its mission to promote the study, observation and use of African American history and culture throughout the state of Maryland. She officially began her duties on May 11, 2009.